

EDINBURGH & LOTHIANS: COUNCIL NEWS

Despite transport spending cuts, Edinburgh and West Lothian have kept big sums for cycling [see our survey], in line with their sustainable transport policies. Percentage-wise, West Lothian's cycle budget is Scotland's highest; whilst per-head Edinburgh is second (after Clackmannan). Also, cyclists benefit substantially from other budgets in both councils. In East and Midlothian, however, the story is very gloomy money-wise.

Whether you are happy or sad with your council's budget, or its plans below, please send comments and ideas to your councillor - see p.1 to find name/address (& copy reply to us). Detailed plans for 96/97 include...

EDINBURGH

✓**Bruntsfield to Meadows** including toucans, bike speed-reduction on Leamington Walk, and re-starting the legal nightmare necessary to close Meadow Place.

✓**Mound to George Sq** incl. Mound southbound bike lane

✓**40 advanced stop lines city-wide**

✓**Princes St cycle lane** Following consultation [SPOKES 60] the council planned a bike lane beside the central reservation; but on

detailed design they find this impossible. SPOKES members felt a kerbside lane very much second-best, and we have asked for a full explanation to enclose with this mailing. However, removal of eastbound cars has already greatly improved Princes Street, and a 2-way dedicated facility is *promised* when west-bound cars are banned.

✓**Greenways (Corstorphine to Leith):** (a) Advanced stop lines at many junctions (b) Bike lanes where possible if no room for bus/bike (c) Car-lanes minimum width, reducing speeding and allowing wider bus/bike lanes.

✓**A cycle design guide, and an audit procedure** to ensure cyclists benefit in all traffic schemes where possible.



WEST LOTHIAN

✓**Livingston network - cycle map**

✓**Livingston network - missing links**, incl. Liv Village to Peel Park primary, with speed table

✓**A899 cycle lanes** Dechmont-Uphall

✓**A803 cycle lanes** Linlithgow/Linlithgow Bridge

✓**Linlithgow Provost Rd/Regent Centre** inc. speed tables

✓**Birnieside-Falside** new lighted path for Windyknowe Primary (and west Bathgate generally)

✓**Edinburgh-Glasgow route** - study for further sections

✓**Bike parking** £10,000 allocation (80 racks county-wide)

EAST & MIDLOTHIAN

✓**E.Loathian** has opened a new **Coastal Path** section, Cuthill to Prestongrange. Extension by the lagoons to Musselburgh is planned, and on to Edinburgh.

✓**Right after the new councils started, Midlothian** greatly impressed us. A 'gateway' being installed at **Lasswade** forced cyclists out into the main traffic. Within 7 days of the first complaint, the council decided to form bike bypasses, and also include them in a second gateway. *We thank locals who raised this with the Council and told us.*

I'M ALL SHOOK UP

The growing trend to cobble historic streets brings growing complaints from cyclists - e.g. the **Royal Mile**, plans for **Chambers Street**

(on which SPOKES was *not* consulted, till we found out); and elsewhere, such as **Dunfermline**.

A successful partial solution is being tried in **Linlithgow**, where smooth-slab strips have been built in. Consideration for cyclists did *not* seem a priority for the design



consultants: it only happened through our ongoing involvement, and forceful lobbying when cobbles were decided on at a late stage. *SPOKES has told the Scottish Office of this scheme, and suggested it for their planned Advice Note on traffic management in historic areas.*

HICK-TOWN SLEIGH-RIDE

An innocuous proposal by Edinburgh Council to pay 25p cycle mileage allowance to councillors and staff provoked a startling outburst from **Cllr Daphne Sleigh**, Conservative Group Leader [Scotsman 31.7.96]. Whilst apparently not objecting to the allowance for ordinary officials, it would be "unprofessional" and "laughable" for a chief executive to be seen on a bike - it was "hick-town politics".

"Is a chief executive on £90,000 going to cycle down to Charlotte Square to meet world finance leaders?", she asks. If it was the Dutch Finance Minister, the answer probably would be "yes" - he cycles 10 miles each way to his office. (He has also just introduced tax relief for bike purchase and maintenance, and company-tax benefits to bike-friendly employers). In cities where 20%-50% cycle to work (through government and council policies), cycling is a natural transport mode for all classes - even top councillors, officials and financiers.

However, no doubt Cllr Sleigh will find the idea even more down-market now Glasgow is to follow Edinburgh's example [Scotsman 13.9.96]. *"We could not be seen as less enthusiastic about cycling than a certain city in the east"* said **Cllr Charlie Gordon**, Transport Committee Chair.

SPOKES has asked English and Scottish Transport Ministers **Sir George Young** and **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** to appraise Cllr Sleigh of government cycling policy - and send her photos of themselves on their bikes!

Perhaps, however, the best way to raise the political acceptability of cycling to concerned Conservatives would be to drop all connotations of poverty and pay a 'professional' mileage allowance, rather than a 'laughable' one - for example the 40p+ car-equivalent allowance paid by various other councils. How about it, Councillor??

Photos: Dave du Feu

